

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION

(PCT Rule 61.2)

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark
Office
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in its capacity as elected Office

Date of mailing: 24 February 2000 (24.02.00)	
International application No.: PCT/EP99/05630	Applicant's or agent's file reference: P000723PC
International filing date: 03 August 1999 (03.08.99)	Priority date: 14 August 1998 (14.08.98)
Applicant: LIDÉN, Fredrik et al	

1. The designated Office is hereby notified of its election made:

☒ in the demand filed with the International preliminary Examining Authority on:
17 August 1999 (17.08.99)

☐ in a notice effecting later election filed with the International Bureau on:

2. The election ☒ was

☐ was not

made before the expiration of 19 months from the priority date or, where Rule 32 applies, within the time limit under Rule 32.2(b).

<p>The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland</p> <p>Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35</p>	<p>Authorized officer:</p> <p>J. Zahra</p> <p>Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38</p>
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ART 34 AMDT

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference P000723PC	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/EP99/05630	International filing date (day/month/year) 03/08/1999	Priority date (day/month/year) 14/08/1998
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC H04B10/14		
Applicant TELEFONAKTIEBOLAGET L.M. ERICSSON ET AL		

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.



2. This REPORT consists of a total of 5 sheets, including this cover sheet.

- ☒ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of 10 sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I ☒ Basis of the report
- II ☐ Priority
- III ☐ Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- IV ☐ Lack of unity of invention
- V ☒ Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI ☐ Certain documents cited
- VII ☒ Certain defects in the international application
- VIII ☒ Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 17/08/1999	Date of completion of this report 14.11.2000
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Authorized officer Sinapius, G Telephone No. +49 89 2399 8170 

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/EP99/05630

I. Basis of the report

1. This report has been drawn on the basis of *(substitute sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to the report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).)*:

Description, pages:

1,2,5-16	as originally filed			
3,4,4a	as received on	01/09/2000	with letter of	01/09/2000

Claims, No.:

1-23	as received on	01/09/2000	with letter of	01/09/2000
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Drawings, sheets:

1/4-4/4	as originally filed
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2. With regard to the **language**, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in written form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/EP99/05630

- ☐ the description, pages:
☒ the claims, Nos.: 24
☐ the drawings, sheets:

5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):

(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)

6. Additional observations, if necessary:
see separate sheet

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes:	Claims	1-23
	No:	Claims	
Inventive step (IS)	Yes:	Claims	1-23
	No:	Claims	
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes:	Claims	1-23
	No:	Claims	

2. Citations and explanations
see separate sheet

VII. Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:
see separate sheet

VIII. Certain observations on the international application

The following observations on the clarity of the claims, description, and drawings or on the question whether the claims are fully supported by the description, are made:
see separate sheet

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/EP99/05630

Reference is made to the following documents:

- D1: PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 097, no. 008, 29 August 1997
& JP 09 093223 A (CANON INC), 4 April 1997 (1997-04-04)
D2: US-A-5 673 129
D3: US-A-5 793 910

Document D2 which is indicated on page 2 of the present description was not cited in the international search report.

Re Item I

Independent claims 1 and 15 are based on original claims 1, 4, 16 and claims 16 and 4.

Re Item V

Reasoned statement with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Novelty:

The document D1 is regarded as being the closest prior art to the subject-matter of independent **claims 1 and 15**, and discloses a method/an arrangement for controlling the wavelength of channels of an optical WDM link with a wavelength selective element through a parameter which influences the selected wavelengths from which the subject-matter of **claim 1** essentially differs in:

- (i) the calculation of the average value of the parameters for each channel at which the output power is a maximum;
- (ii) the utilisation of the means value as an indicator of wavelength drift in the optical link and to adjust/correct a deviation between the launched and selected wavelengths at the wavelength selective element and/or the optical transmission means.

The subject-matter of **claim 15** differs from the disclosure of D1 essentially in corresponding features of the control means.

Therefore the subject-matter of **claims 1 and 15** is novel (Article 33(2) PCT).

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/EP99/05630

2. Inventive step:

- a. The problem to be solved by the present invention may be considered as the provision of a reliable and simple arrangement/method for adjusting a filter receiving multiple channel wavelengths.
- b. Document D1 discloses the determination of the one parameter each for two channels at which the respective output power is a maximum. Document D2 discloses the determination of different parameters for different wavelengths using separate components. These documents do not address the problem of adjusting a filter for multiple channel wavelengths.

In document D3, which addresses a similar problem, a different approach is chosen (using a signal at a reference frequency, cf. especially column 3, lines 35-59 and figs. 4 and 6). Therefore a modification of the teaching of D1 to include the combination of the above features (i) and (ii) is not considered obvious. Hence the solution to the above problem proposed in **claims 1 and 15** of the present application is considered as involving an inventive step (Article 33(3) PCT).

- c. **Claims 2-14 and 16-23** are dependent on claims 1 and 15 and as such also meet the requirements of the PCT with respect to novelty and inventive step.

Re Item VII

Certain defects in the international application

Although **claim 1** is drafted in the two-part form, the feature related to the determination of a channel centre value of the parameter for each channel is incorrectly placed in the characterising portion, as it is disclosed in document D1 in combination with the features placed in the preamble (Rule 6.3(b) PCT).

Re Item VIII

Certain observations on the international application

The references of **claims 5-14 and 16-23** to some of the previous claims and/or to themselves are give rise to lack of clarity of these claims.

5 of the laser temperature. However, the provision of a
stable temperature environment for the Bragg grating
without recourse to adjustment on the basis of
variations in the reflected wavelength is difficult to
10 implement and is dependent on the reliability of
normally electrical heating and cooling elements.

It is also known from JP 09 162070 to tune a filter in a
receiver to two separate signal wavelengths. The filter
is adjusted to receive different wavelengths by a
15 control voltage, and a step algorithm is employed to
determine the voltage at which the maximum signal is
obtained for each wavelength. However, this reference is
silent on how to tune the filter optimally to receive
both wavelengths.

20 In the light of the disadvantages associated with the
prior art it is an object of the present invention to
provide an arrangement and procedure for controlling
the wavelengths of channels in an optical WDM system
25 which is reliable, simple and inexpensive in its
implementation.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

30 To control the wavelengths of channels transmitted by
one or more optical sources and received by a wavelength
selective element, the present invention proposes a
method wherein at the receiving end a value of a
parameter that influences the wavelengths selected by
the wavelength selective element is determined relative
35 to a nominal starting value that enables the best
reception of the channel. The mean parameter value for
each channel is then determined and this mean value is
utilised to ascertain whether the wavelengths used in
the link have drifted. The parameter value associated
40 with the channel centre wavelength is accurately located

5 by determining two parameter values at which the output
power drops by a predetermined amount, and then
calculating the central value. Preferably the parameter
values are difference values relative to the nominal
10 starting value. By determining the proportion of
channels demonstrating wavelength drift, both the source
and magnitude of the wavelength drift can be ascertained
and corrected either by adjusting the parameter value of
the wavelength selective element or by adjusting the
15 wavelength launched by one or more lasers. A wavelength
control arrangement for use in an optical WDM link
according to the invention includes control means that
communicate with a parameter regulator of the wavelength
selective element adapted to regulate a parameter
20 influencing the wavelengths selected by the element and
with means that monitor the output power of the
wavelength selective element. The control means
determine a parameter mean value corresponding to the
average of parameter values at which the output power
for each channel is a maximum. The control means are

5 furthermore coupled to a regulator adapted to regulate a
wavelength influencing parameter of a laser and laser
drive circuit and are adapted to determine the magnitude
and source of a wavelength error and subsequently
10 control one or both of the wavelengths launched by the
lasers and the wavelengths received by the wavelength
selective element

Advantageously, the method and arrangement according to
the present invention permit wavelength drift to be both
15 detected and corrected whether caused by one or more
malfunctioning lasers or by the wavelength selective
element when the parameter utilised is temperature,
wavelength drift at the wavelength selective element
could, for example, result from the deterioration of
20 associated electrical temperature regulating elements.
Furthermore, the method obviates the need for permanent
wavelength references at the optical sources or lasers,
but nevertheless permits wavelength drift to be
determined and corrected with high precision. The
25 control measurement can be performed entirely at the
receiving end of the link without impeding or degrading
normal traffic flow. A further advantage of the method
and

5

CLAIMS

1. Method for controlling the wavelength of a plurality
of channels launched by optical transmission means
and received by a wavelength selective element in an
optical WDM link, the method including:

noting a starting value of a parameter influencing
the wavelengths selected by said wavelength selective
element, characterised by the steps of:

for each channel, determining a channel centre value
(409) of said parameter corresponding to a value of
said parameter relative to said starting value at
which the output power of said channel is a maximum,

calculating a mean value (501) corresponding to an
average of said channel centre values for all
channels, and

utilising said mean value (502) as an indicator of
wavelength drift in said optical link and to adjust a
deviation between said launched wavelengths and
wavelengths selected by said wavelength selective
element and to correct said wavelength deviation at
at least one of said wavelength selective element and
said optical transmission means.

2. Method as claimed in claim 1, wherein determining
said channel centre values includes

for each channel, determining a first parameter value
(402-404) of said wavelength selective element
relative to said starting parameter value at which
the power of said channel output from said wavelength
selective element falls below a predetermined level,

5

for each channel, determining a second parameter value (406-408) of said wavelength selective optical element relative to said starting value at which the power of said channel output from said wavelength selective optical element falls below said predetermined level, and

10

for each channel, determining a channel mean value (409) corresponding to the average of said first and second parameter values.

15

3. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said first and second parameter values are difference values relative to said starting value.

20

4. A Method as claimed in claim 1, including utilising said channel centre values to determine the proportion of channels which manifest a drift in wavelength relative to the total number of channels, and

25

utilising said mean value (MD) to adjust the parameter influencing the wavelengths selected by said wavelength selective element when said proportion exceeds a predetermined amount.

30

5. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, including:

35

for each of at least a predetermined number of channels

comparing said channel centre value with a predetermined channel variance value (503) to obtain a difference value indicative of a wavelength shift

40

5 in said channel.

6. A method as claimed in claim 6, including determining
the proportion of said channels which demonstrate a
wavelength drift by summing the difference values
10 (504) that deviate from zero for at least a
predetermined number of channels.

7. A method as claimed in claim 6 or 7, including
setting said predetermined channel variance value as
15 a difference between a value of said parameter of
said wavelength selective element at which the output
power of said channel having a predetermined nominal
channel wavelength is optimised and a value of said
parameter of said wavelength selective element at
20 which the average output power of all channels having
predetermined nominal wavelengths is optimised.

8. A method as claimed in any one of claims 6 to 8,
including:

25 prior to operation of said optical link, setting the
wavelengths of the optical transmission sources to
predetermined nominal wavelengths,

30 setting said wavelength selective element to a
nominal parameter value at which the output power of
all said channels is optimised,

35 for each channel, determining a first value of said
parameter of said wavelength selective element
relative to said nominal value at which the power of
said channel output from said wavelength selective
element falls below a predetermined level,

40 for each channel, determining a second parameter
value of said wavelength selective optical element
relative to said nominal value at which the power of

- 5 said channel output from said wavelength selective
 optical element falls below said predetermined level,

 for each channel determining the mean of said first
 and second parameter values, and
10 for each channel, utilising said mean as said
 predetermined channel variance value (409).
- 15 9. A method as claimed in one of claims 6 to 9,
 including utilising said difference values to adjust
 a wavelength influencing parameter of said wavelength
 selective element.
- 20 10. A method as claimed in one of claims 6 to 9,
 including for each channel utilising said difference
 value to correct the wavelength launched by said
 optical transmission means.
- 25 11. A method as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 11,
 wherein said mean value is a weighted average of
 said first and second parameter values for all
 channels.
- 30 12. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12,
 characterised in that said parameter is the
 temperature of said wavelength selective element.
- 35 13. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12,
 characterised in that said parameter is an electrical
 injection current into said wavelength selective
 element.
- 40 14. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12,
 characterised in that said parameter is a mechanical
 movement of an optical element associated with said
 wavelength selective element.

- 5 15. A wavelength control arrangement for controlling the
wavelengths of channels utilised in an optical WDM
link including
- 10 a wavelength selective element (50) for receiving a
combined optical signal including a plurality of
optical channels launched by optical transmission
means (10, 110) and adapted to separate at least two
optical channels according to wavelength,
- 15 monitoring means (60, 70) for detecting optical
signals on said channels output from said wavelength
selective element (50), and
- 20 means (90) for regulating a parameter capable of
influencing wavelengths selected by said wavelength
selective element (50),
- characterised by
- 25 control means (100) arranged to communicate with said
regulator (90) and said monitoring means (70) and
adapted
- 30 to determine a parameter mean value of said
wavelength selective element (50) corresponding to an
average of parameter values for each channel relative
to a starting parameter value of said wavelength
selective element (50) at which the output power of
said channel is a maximum,
- 35 to determine a wavelength drift on the basis of said
parameter mean value
- 40 and to generate at least one control signal for
rectifying wavelength.

- 5 16. An arrangement as claimed in claim 16, characterised
in that said control means (100) are adapted to
determine two parameter values associated with said
wavelength selective element (50) for each channel at
10 which the output power of said channel falls below a
predetermined level and to calculate said parameter
mean value from the two parameter values for each
channel.
- 15 17. An arrangement as claimed in claim 16 or 17,
characterised in that said control means (100)
comprise processing means for determining the
magnitude and source of said wavelength drift.
- 20 18. An arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 16 to
18, characterised in that said wavelength selective
element (50) is an arrayed waveguide grating (AWG).
- 25 19. An arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 16 to
19, characterised in that said control means (100)
are adapted to communicate with said optical
transmission means (10) to alter a launched
wavelength using said at least one control signal.
- 30 20. An arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 16 to
20, characterised in that a regulator (130)
associated with a laser (110) in said transmission
means (10) is adapted to vary a wavelength
influencing parameter of said laser (110) in response
to at least one control signal from said control
35 means (100).
- 40 21. An arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 16 to
21, characterised in that said regulating means (90)
are adapted to vary said parameter of said wavelength
selective element (50) in response to at least one
control signal from said control means (100).

5 22. An arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 16 to
22, characterised in that said control means (10) are
adapted to communicate with at least one of said
transmission means (10) and said regulating means
10 (90) and monitoring means (70) via a control channel
(150).

23. An optical WDM link comprising a wavelength control
arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 23.

15



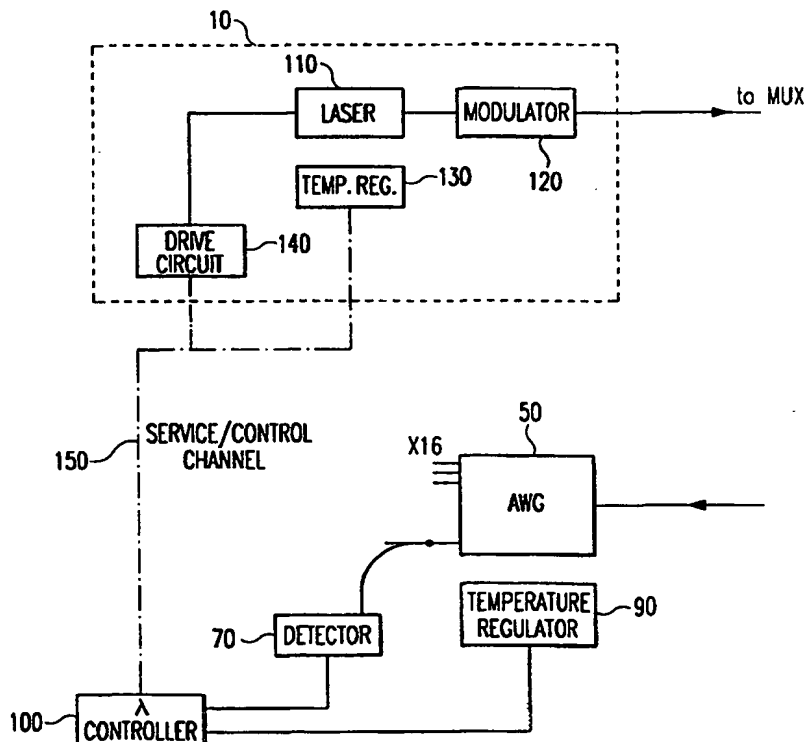
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

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(21) International Application Number: PCT/EP99/05630 (22) International Filing Date: 3 August 1999 (03.08.99) (30) Priority Data: 98115369.5 14 August 1998 (14.08.98) EP (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): TELEFONAK- TIEBOLAGET LM ERICSSON [SE/SE]; S-126 25 Stock- holm (SE). (72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): LIDÉN, Fredrik [SE/SE]; Åldermannavägen 96, S-145 57 Norsborg (SE). ÖBERG, Magnus [SE/SE]; Pettersbergsvägen 16A, S-129 40 Hägersten (SE). (74) Agents: HARRISON, Michael, C. et al.; AlbiHns GmbH, Grasserstrasse 10, D-80339 Munich (DE).		(81) Designated States: AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SL, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG). Published Without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report.	

(54) Title: WAVELENGTH CONTROL IN OPTICAL WDM SYSTEMS

(57) Abstract

Wavelength drift in an optical WDM system between wavelengths launched by lasers (110) and received at a demultiplexer (50) can lead to disturbance of traffic signals if not identified and rectified rapidly. It is proposed to identify wavelength drift by determining a difference in temperature of the demultiplexer (50) for each channel between an actual temperature and a temperature for optimal transmission of the channel. The mean of these temperature differences for all channels is indicative of wavelength drift, while each difference is utilised to determine whether an individual channel is drifting in wavelength and to correct the drift. Wavelength drift can be detected and corrected whether sourced at a laser (110) or due to a temperature variation at the demultiplexer (50). Measurement and control can be performed during normal operation without impeding or degrading traffic flow. Wavelength influencing parameters other than temperature can be utilized.



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Wavelength control in Optical WDM systems

1. Field of the Invention

10 The invention relates to wavelength division multiplexed optical communication systems and, in particular, to the measurement and control of wavelengths transmitted by an optical transmission source and received by an optical
15 wavelength selective element.

2. Background Art

20 In wavelength division multiplexed (WDM) optical communication systems, a single fibre optic cable carries a plurality of optical signal channels, each channel being assigned a particular carrier wavelength. The signal channels are generated using wavelength specific lasers. These channels are then coupled to the traffic
25 fibre using an optical combiner or multiplexer and sent to the next node in the system, possibly via a number of optical amplifiers. At the receiving node, the different wavelengths are filtered out in a demultiplexer and are sent to a respective receiver where they are converted to
30 electrical signals and relayed to further systems or networks.

35 In the demultiplexer, individual optical channels must be selected from the multiplexed optical signal. To ensure that an optical signal is properly selected, the carrier wavelength launched by the laser transmitter must accurately match the wavelength selected in the demultiplexer. Although the lasers are generally very stable in terms of wavelength, erroneous operation can

5 lead to wavelength drift in an individual channel over
time. Similarly, the wavelengths of the demultiplexer
passbands can drift. It is important that this wavelength
drift is detected and corrected before the channel has
10 deteriorated so much that traffic is disturbed in the
channel itself as a result of attenuation, and in
neighbouring channels by crosstalk. This is particularly
important for dense WDM systems wherein the wavelength
spacing between channels is very small, often of the
order of a nanometer.

15 A technique for dynamically stabilising a wavelength
selective element in a WDM system is described in US-A-5
673 129. This document describes that a wavelength
reference is used to stabilise the output wavelength of a
20 transmission laser while the reflection wavelength of a
Bragg grating used as a wavelength selective element at
the receiving end of the system is dynamically adjusted
to obtain the maximum reflected optical signal and so
accurately correlate the Bragg grating to the
25 corresponding transmitted wavelength. The adjustment of
the Bragg grating reflection wavelength is obtained by
temperature tuning or adjustment of the amount of
physical tension applied to the Bragg grating.

30 While this arrangement ensures the accurate correlation
of the wavelength selective element to the transmitted
wavelength, an extreme drift in wavelength in an
individual laser will not be corrected and could
ultimately lead to crosstalk between adjacent channels.
35 Furthermore, the need for a wavelength reference for each
laser necessitates the provision of a relatively large
number of potentially costly components.

5 In an alternative embodiment described in the same
patent, the temperature of the Bragg grating is held
constant and the signal reflected at the grating is fed
back to the transmitting laser and used to dynamically
10 tune the laser to the reflected wavelength by adjustment
of the laser temperature. However, the provision of a
stable temperature environment for the Bragg grating
without recourse to adjustment on the basis of variations
in the reflected wavelength is difficult to implement and
15 is dependent on the reliability of normally electrical
heating and cooling elements.

In the light of the disadvantages associated with the
prior art it is an object of the present invention to
provide an arrangement and procedure for controlling the
20 wavelengths of channels in an optical WDM system which is
reliable, simple and inexpensive in its implementation.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

25 To control the wavelengths of channels transmitted by one
or more optical sources and received by a wavelength
selective element, the present invention proposes a
method wherein at the receiving end a value of a
wavelength influencing parameter of the wavelength
30 selective element that enables the best reception of the
channel is determined. This value is then utilised to
ascertain whether the wavelengths used in the link have
drifted. This parameter value associated with the channel
centre wavelength is accurately located by determining
35 two parameter values at which the output power drops by a
predetermined amount, and then calculating the central
value. When the parameter values are difference values
relative to a nominal starting value, the mean averaged
over all channels serves as an indicator of wavelength

5 drift in the link. By determining the proportion of
channels demonstrating wavelength drift, both the source
and magnitude of the wavelength drift can be ascertained
and corrected either by adjusting the parameter value of
the wavelength selective element or by adjusting the
10 wavelength launched by one or more lasers. A wavelength
control arrangement for use in an optical WDM link
according to the invention is characterised by control
means that communicate with a parameter regulator of the
wavelength selective element that is adapted to regulate
15 a wavelength influencing parameter and with means that
monitor the output power of the wavelength selective
element. The control means are furthermore coupled to a
regulator adapted to regulate a wavelength influencing
parameter of a laser and laser drive circuit and are
20 adapted to determine the magnitude and source of a
wavelength error and subsequently control one or both of
the wavelengths launched by the lasers and the
wavelengths received by the wavelength selective element.

25 Advantageously, the method and arrangement according to
the present invention permit wavelength drift to be both
detected and corrected whether caused by one or more
malfunctioning lasers or by the wavelength selective
element when the parameter utilised is temperature,
30 wavelength drift at the wavelength selective element
could, for example, result from the deterioration of
associated electrical temperature regulating elements.
Furthermore, the method obviates the need for permanent
wavelength references at the optical sources or lasers,
35 but nevertheless permits wavelength drift to be
determined and corrected with high precision. The control
measurement can be performed entirely at the receiving
end of the link without impeding or degrading normal
traffic flow. A further advantage of the method and

5 arrangement according to the present invention is that
the division of the channels received by the wavelength
selective element does not need to precisely match the
transmitted wavelengths. The best average power for all
channels can be defined and maintained using the method
10 and arrangement according to the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

15 Further objects and advantages of the present invention
will become apparent from the following description which
describes the preferred embodiments by way of example
with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

20 Fig. 1 schematically depicts a 16 channel
optical wavelength division
multiplexed system,

25 Fig. 2 schematically shows the control
system for controlling matching of
wavelength between the transmitting
optical sources and the demultiplexer
filter,

30 Fig. 3 shows the typical transmission
characteristics of an arrayed
waveguide grating utilised as a
demultiplexer filter, and

35 Figs. 4 and 5 show flow diagrams of the procedure
for determining and correcting
wavelength shift between optical
source lasers and the demultiplexer
filter.

5 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The WDM link depicted in Fig. 1 includes a plurality of WDM transmitters 10, each adapted to transmit data signals modulated on a specific transmission wavelength. 10 The transmitters 10 each comprise a wavelength specific laser 110 (see Fig. 2) for launching the carrier wavelength. The multiple channels are coupled to a traffic cable 30 by a multiplexer 20 and are sent to the receiving node possibly via a number of amplifiers 40 if 15 the distance between the nodes is large.

At the receiving node, the channels are split by a demultiplexer filter 50. In the exemplary embodiment the demultiplexer filter is an arrayed waveguide grating 20 (AWG) in silicon dioxide on silicon (SiO_2 on Si), however it will be understood that other materials and also alternative wavelength selective elements may be employed. The divided channels are then passed on individual cables to corresponding WDM receivers 80, of 25 which only one is illustrated here for convenience.

The light signals of the individual channels output from the demultiplexer filter 50 are also monitored using detectors 70. One detector 70 only is illustrated in the 30 figure for clarity, however, it will be understood that a detector 70 will typically be coupled to each outgoing channel. Alternatively, a single detector could monitor the light signals from all outgoing channels in sequence. The detectors 70 can be any optical detector that 35 converts an optical signal into electrical energy such as a PIN diode detector, and are typically coupled to the optical transmission line using optical taps 60 that divert a small portion of the incident power towards the associated detector 70.

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The components of the wavelength control system are shown in Fig. 2. In this figure like reference numerals have been used for like elements shown in Fig. 1. The elements include, at the receiving end of the optical link shown in the lower half of Fig. 2, the demultiplexer filter constituted by an arrayed waveguide grating (AWG) filter 50, the detectors 70 coupled to each outgoing channel of the AWG filter 50 by a respective optical tap 60 (here again only one detector 70 and fibre tap 60 are illustrated for convenience), a temperature regulator 90 associated with the demultiplexer filter 50 and a wavelength controller 100. The temperature regulator 90 is a device for varying the temperature of the AWG filter 50 and may comprise a heater, a cooler or a combination of the two, including, but not limited to, resistive heaters and thermoelectric coolers.

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The wavelength controller 100, which typically may comprise a microprocessor with associated memory, is coupled to the output of the detectors 70 and the temperature regulator 90. The controller 100 is likewise coupled to each transmitter 10 of the optical link, only one of which is illustrated here, via a service or control channel 150 indicated by a dashed-dotted line in Fig. 2. In each transmitter 10, the controller 100 communicates with a laser drive circuit 140, which supplies bias current to a laser 110 and with a laser temperature regulator 130. The laser is typically a distributed feedback laser (DFB) although it will be understood that other types of laser can also be utilised. The laser temperature regulator incorporates a thermal/cooling element, such as a Peltier element or the like, for varying the temperature of the laser and accordingly adjusting the emitted wavelength. In

5 alternative laser types the emitted wavelength may be controlled by adjusting electrical current to the laser, or by the mechanical movement of optical elements, for example to increase or reduce strain. It will therefore to be understood that appropriate means of adjustment can
10 be provided to an alternative laser in place of the arrangement described with reference to the figures. The transmitter 10 further includes a modulator 120 for modulating information data on the carrier signal.

15 It should be noted that while in Fig. 2 the controller 100 is shown disposed at the receiving end of the optical link it may also be placed at the transmitting end, in which case it would communicate with the detectors 70 and the temperature regulator 90 at the receiving end via the
20 service channel 150. Alternatively the controller 100 may be located remote from both ends of the link.

A typical transmission characteristic of a demultiplexer filter 20 suitable for use in an optical WDM link is
25 shown in Fig. 3. In the example shown, the passband wavelengths correspond to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) standard wavelengths defined in the 1500 nm telecoms window. It is possible to adjust the passband wavelengths of the filter 20 by
30 varying the demultiplexer temperature. For an AWG filter in SiO₂ on Si, the variation in passband wavelength is of the order of 0.012nm per degree Celsius. Since the transmission of the demultiplexer is wavelength dependent, the signal power to each detector 70 will vary
35 with the temperature of the demultiplexer. It is possible to determine the temperature accurately, and in this way to indirectly measure the wavelengths of the incoming channels relative to one another. Specifically, the centre wavelength of a transmitted channel is ascertained

5 by determining the temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50 at which this wavelength is transmitted. In this manner both wavelength drift of one or more individual channels and temperature variation in the demultiplexer can be detected accurately.

10 While the embodiment shown in the figures and described above is applied to the case wherein the passband wavelengths of the demultiplexer filter 50 vary with temperature, it will be understood that other
15 demultiplexer filters may be utilized which have a passband wavelength dependent on other parameters, including, but not limited to electrical injection current or mechanical movement of optical elements. With such a device the determination and measurement of
20 wavelength drift will be achieved by varying the appropriate wavelength influencing parameter of the demultiplexer filter 50. Accordingly the temperature regulator 90 of the demultiplexer filter 50 will be replaced, or supplemented by an appropriate regulator or
25 regulators for varying the parameter of interest. A similar parameter regulator can be employed at the transmitter 10 for adjusting the wavelength of the laser in place of, or in addition to the temperature regulator 130.

30 The method for controlling wavelength using temperature adjustment is described below. It should be noted that for devices with wavelength influencing parameters other than temperature an analogous method could be used.

35 Prior to operating the link the lasers are first adjusted to the desired nominal wavelengths. In an optical WDM network the nominal wavelengths preferably conform to the ITU standard for the 1500nm telecoms window. The

adjustment is effected using a well calibrated external measuring instrument such as an optical wavelength meter or the like. Since the division of the demultiplexer filter 50 channels may not exactly match the predetermined nominal wavelengths, it may not be possible to obtain maximum power for all channels at the demultiplexer filter 50. To adjust for this eventuality, the feedback loop constituted by the controller 100, the temperature regulator 90 and the detectors 70 is used to set the temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50 to obtain the optimal mean output power from all utilised channels. To this end, the controller 100 performs an appropriate step algorithm which adjusts the temperature of the wavelength selective element until the mean output power from all channels is optimised. Note that the mean output power need not be the median of the individual output powers, but could be weighted to ensure that no individual channel falls below a predetermined threshold level. It should be noted that in the following method the number of channels is indicated by n . In the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 1 and 2, therefore, n goes from 1 to 16.

Once both the nominal wavelengths and the initial temperature have been defined and fixed, the controller 100 calculates the initial variance (IV_n) for each channel. This value corresponds to the difference between the temperature of the selective element when it transmits the optimum mean power of all channels and its temperature when it transmits a single channel optimally. The initial variance value (IV_n) for each channel is obtained using the procedure A illustrated in Fig. 4. In step 401 the starting temperature of the wavelength selective element, which in this case is the temperature for optimal average transmission of all nominal

5 wavelengths, and the power level of each channel is stored. The starting temperature may be an absolute temperature value, but it is preferable that this temperature be set to a nominal value, e.g. 0. The temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50 is incremented
10 in step 402. In step 403 the power level of each channel at the output of the demultiplexer filter 50 is compared with the initial output power. If it has fallen below 0.5dB, the temperature is stored (step 405) if not, the method returns to step 402 and the temperature of the
15 demultiplexer filter 50 is incremented again. This continues until the power levels of all channels have fallen below the 0.5dB level and the corresponding temperatures of the demultiplexer 50 is stored. In practice the stored temperatures will be quantized values
20 corresponding to the number of temperature increments. The demultiplexer filter 50 is then returned to the starting temperature in step 405. In step 406, the temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50 is decremented. In step 407 the output power level of each
25 channel is measured and compared with the initial power level to determine whether it has dropped by 0.5dB. If not, the method returns to step 406, otherwise, the corresponding temperature is stored. This continues until two temperature values (DHn and DLn) corresponding to the
30 -0.5dB power levels have been determined for all channels. The mean IVn of these two values (DHn, DLn) for each channel computed in step 409 then corresponds to the difference in temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50 for transmitting the mean optimal power of all channels
35 and the optimal power of the channel in question when the channels are tuned to the predetermined nominal wavelengths. By inference, this mean variance value IVn likewise corresponds to the initial wavelength error for each channel. The mean value IVn is then stored for each

5 channel in the controller 100 for use in the subsequent wavelength checks.

When the temperature values (DN_n , DL_n) are difference values relative to the starting temperature, then, providing the centre wavelength of the filter 50 lies within the 0.5dB levels of the actual launched channel, one value DN_n will be positive and the other DL_n negative. Accordingly if the launched centre wavelength is exactly equal to the centre filter wavelength, the initial variance value IV_n will be zero. Note that since the temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50 has been adjusted for optimal average output power for all channels, the mean of these variance values IV_n for all channels will be zero at this stage.

20 The initial starting temperature of the demultiplexer 50 determined as described above is the ideal operating temperature and is consequently maintained using conventional electrical thermal and cooling elements and a suitable control circuit which is not shown. With time, however, these electrical elements may deteriorate, causing the real temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50 to vary and hence the passbands of the filter 50 to shift in wavelength. Errors leading to drift in wavelength may also arise in individual lasers 110.

Hence, during operation of the optical WDM link the correlation between the launched wavelengths and the wavelengths transmitted through the demultiplexer filter 50 is checked at regular intervals using the procedures laid out in Figs. 4 and 5. Firstly, steps 401 to 409 of procedure A are followed as described above with, in this case, the starting temperature being the actual temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50 at the time of

5 measurement, and the mean of the difference values DH_n and DL_n being a channel mean value MCD_n , i.e. the mean of the difference values DH_n and DL_n for each channel relative to the actual temperature. The method then goes on to procedure B shown in Fig. 5. In step 501 the
10 average MD of all channel mean values MCD_n is calculated. This average value is computed on the same basis as the initial average output power of all channels and accordingly may be weighted if the initial distribution of channel wavelengths in the AWG filter rendered this
15 necessary. Accordingly if no wavelength drift has occurred on the link, i.e. if the wavelengths launched by the lasers 110 and the temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50 are unchanged, the average mean MD will be zero. In this case the comparison in step 502 results in
20 an answer YES and the procedure is terminated. However, if this value is not equal to zero, wavelength drift must have occurred, as a result of an error either in one or more lasers or the temperature regulation of the demultiplexer filter 50, or a combination of both of
25 these. The procedure then continues in step 503, where for each channel the initial variance value IV_n is compared with the determined mean value MCD_n . This step determines the number of individual channels whose wavelength has varied with respect to the initial value.
30 The sum of these comparison results which deviate from zero is then compared with a predetermined value P in step 504 to determine the proportion of channels which have varied with respect to the initial settings. Since it is unlikely that all lasers 110 will fail
35 simultaneously, a majority of deviating channel wavelengths will indicate that the temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50 has altered. Accordingly, The value P is selected to represent a failure in the majority of the channels used, or at least in the

5 proportion of the used channels which statistically are unlikely to fail simultaneously. It may not be necessary to perform the comparison of step 503 for all channels. If at least a predetermined number of comparisons is performed, this will enable the accurate determination of
10 how widespread any wavelength drift is, and accordingly give an indication as to whether the temperature of the lasers 110, the demultiplexer filter 50 or both need adjusting to correct the wavelength.

15 If fewer channels than P have drifted from the initial wavelengths, then the method turns to step 505 where, for each channel, the channel mean values MCDn are used to correct the wavelengths launched by the corresponding lasers 110, preferably by altering the temperature using
20 the regulator 130. Conversely, if the result of the comparison in step 504 is YES, the method continues to step 506 where the common deviation of the channels is determined. This value is then used in step 507 to correct the temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50.
25 Once the error caused by the demultiplexer filter 50 has been corrected, the channel mean values MCDn are corrected in step 508 by subtracting the common value determined in step 506. The corrected MCDn values are then used in step 505 to correct the wavelengths launched
30 by the lasers, if necessary.

This procedure can, for example, be performed once every month since it is primarily adapted to detect long variations in wavelength. The procedure can also be
35 carried out during normal traffic operation without deterioration of payload traffic. To this end, the temperature increments used in method A in Fig. 4 are selected to obtain a reasonable variation in wavelength of the light signals transmitted by the demultiplexer

5 filter without unduly attenuating the received signals or provoking crosstalk in adjacent channels. For example, for an AWG demultiplexer filter in SiO₂ on silicon, increments of 1 °C resulting in a stepwise variation in transmitted wavelength of 0.012nm is acceptable. It should further be noted that the output power reduction of 0.5dB is also given only by way of example. This value is similarly chosen to permit accurate but easily measurable wavelength variations without disturbance to traffic by attenuation or crosstalk.

15 In an alternative embodiment of the invention steps 503 and 504 in the method B of Fig. 5 are replaced by a single step wherein the mean variation for all channels MD is compared with a predetermined fixed value. This value is selected according to the number of channels utilised and relies on the fact that a wavelength drift due to a variation in temperature of the demultiplexer filter 50 will result in a total mean variation n times as large as the same drift in a single laser when n channels are used. Since it is highly improbable that one or more lasers will vary in wavelength to a degree which results in the same mean value, or that their wavelengths vary to an extent that cancels out a variation caused by the demultiplexer filter temperature, a predetermined fixed value can be selected to provide a reasonably accurate gauge as to the source of the wavelength drift.

35 In a further embodiment of the invention, the processing step 508 can be omitted and in its place the whole method starting from step 401 of procedure A be repeated. Since the drift caused by a temperature variation in the demultiplexer has been corrected, a repeat of the whole

5 method will result in the correction of the wavelengths
launched by the lasers, if necessary.

The aforementioned method is particularly well adapted
for use in an optical WDM system where pre-defined
10 wavelengths are used, however, it also has application in
optical WDM point-to-point links where the standards laid
down for wavelengths need not be respected. In such a
point-to-point link, the method described with reference
to Fig. 4 can be used to accurately match the wavelengths
15 launched by the lasers 110 to the wavelength division of
the demultiplexer filter 50 and so enable optimal
transmission over all channels.

5

CLAIMS

10 1. A method for controlling the wavelength of a plurality of channels launched by optical transmission means and received by at least one wavelength selective element in an optical WDM link, the method including:

15 noting a starting value of a wavelength influencing parameter of said wavelength selective element,

20 for each channel, determining a channel centre value (MCDn) of said parameter of said wavelength selective element at which the output power of said channel is a maximum,

25 utilising said channel centre values (MCDn) to determine a deviation between said launched wavelengths and wavelengths selected by said wavelength selective element and to correct said wavelength deviation at at least one of said wavelength selective element and said optical transmission means.

30 2. Method as claimed in claim 1, wherein determining said channel centre values includes

35 for each channel, determining a first parameter value (DHn) of said wavelength selective element relative to said starting parameter value at which the power of said channel output from said wavelength selective element falls below a predetermined level,

for each channel, determining a second parameter value (DLn) of said wavelength selective optical element

5 relative to said starting value at which the power of
said channel output from said wavelength selective
optical element falls below said predetermined level, and

10 for each channel, determining a channel mean value (MCDn)
corresponding to the average of said first and second
parameter values.

15 3. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said first
and second parameter values are difference values (DHn,
DLn) relative to said starting value.

20 4. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3,
including calculating a mean value (MD) corresponding to
the average of said channel centre values (MCDn) for all
channels, and

25 utilising said mean value (MD) as an indicator of
wavelength drift in said optical link and to adjust a
deviation between said launched wavelengths and
wavelengths selected by said wavelength selective element
in said channels.

30 5. Method as claimed in claim 4, including utilising
said channel centre values to determine the proportion of
channels which manifest a drift in wavelength relative to
the total number of channels, and

35 utilising said mean value (MD) to adjust a wavelength
influencing parameter of said wavelength selective
element when said proportion exceeds a predetermined
amount.

5 6. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, including:

for each of at least a predetermined number of channels
comparing said channel centre value (MCDn) with a
10 predetermined channel variance value (IVn) to obtain a
difference value (Dn) indicative of a wavelength shift in
said channel.

15 7. A method as claimed in claim 6, including determining
the proportion of said channels which demonstrate a
wavelength drift by summing the difference values (Dn)
that deviate from zero for at least a predetermined
number of channels.

20 8. A method as claimed in claim 6 or 7, including setting
said predetermined channel variance value (IVn) as a
difference between a value of said parameter of said
wavelength selective element at which the output power of
said channel having a predetermined nominal channel
25 wavelength is optimised and a value of said parameter of
said wavelength selective element at which the average
output power of all channels having predetermined nominal
wavelengths is optimised.

30 9. A method as claimed in any one of claims 6 to 8, including:

prior to operation of said optical link, setting the
wavelengths of the optical transmission sources to
35 predetermined nominal wavelengths,

setting said wavelength selective element to a nominal
parameter value at which the output power of all said
channels is optimised,

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for each channel, determining a first value of said parameter of said wavelength selective element relative to said nominal value at which the power of said channel output from said wavelength selective element falls below a predetermined level,

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for each channel, determining a second parameter value of said wavelength selective optical element relative to said nominal value at which the power of said channel output from said wavelength selective optical element falls below said predetermined level,

20

for each channel determining the mean of said first and second parameter values, and

for each channel, utilising said mean as said predetermined channel variance value (IVn).

25

10. A method as claimed in one of claims 6 to 9, including utilising said difference values (Dn) to adjust a wavelength influencing parameter of said wavelength selective element.

30

11. A method as claimed in one of claims 6 to 9, including for each channel utilising said difference value (Dn) to correct the wavelength launched by said optical transmission means.

35

12. A method as claimed in any one of claims 3 to 11, wherein said mean value (MD) is a weighted average of said first and second parameter values for all channels.

5 13. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12,
characterised in that said parameter is the temperature
of said wavelength selective element.

10 14. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12,
characterised in that said parameter is an electrical
injection current into said wavelength selective element.

15 15. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12,
characterised in that said parameter is a mechanical
movement of an optical element associated with said
wavelength selective element.

20 16. A wavelength control arrangement for controlling the
wavelengths of channels utilised in an optical WDM link
including

25 a wavelength selective element (50) for receiving a
combined optical signal including a plurality of optical
channels launched by optical transmission means (10, 110)
and adapted to separate at least two optical channels
according to wavelength,

30 monitoring means (60, 70) for detecting optical signals
on said channels output from said wavelength selective
element (50), and

35 means for regulating a wavelength influencing parameter
(90) associated with said wavelength selective element
(50) for regulating said parameter of said wavelength
selective element,

characterised by

5 control means (100) arranged to communicate with said
regulator (90) and said monitoring means (70) and adapted
to determine a parameter value of said wavelength
selective element (50) for each channel relative to a
10 starting parameter value of said wavelength selective
element (50) at which the output power of said channel is
a maximum, to determine a wavelength drift on the basis
of said parameter values and to generate at least one
control signal for rectifying wavelength.

15 17. An arrangement as claimed in claim 16, characterised
in that said control means (100) are adapted to determine
two parameter values associated with said wavelength
selective element (50) for each channel at which the
output power of said channel falls below a predetermined
20 level.

18. An arrangement as claimed in claim 16 or 17,
characterised in that said control means (100) comprise
processing means for determining the magnitude and source
25 of said wavelength drift.

19. An arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 16 to
18, characterised in that said wavelength selective
element (50) is an arrayed waveguide grating (AWG).
30

20. An arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 16 to
19, characterised in that said control means (100) are
adapted to communicate with said optical transmission
means (10) to alter the launched wavelength using said at
35 least one control signal.

21. An arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 16 to
20, characterised in that a regulator (130) associated
with a laser (110) in said transmission means (10) is

5 adapted to vary a wavelength influencing parameter of said laser (110) in response to at least one control signal from said control means (100).

10 22. An arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 16 to 21, characterised in that said regulating means (90) are adapted to vary said parameter of said wavelength selective element (50) in response to at least one control signal from said control means (100).

15 23. An arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 16 to 22, characterised in that said control means (10) are adapted to communicate with at least one of said transmission means (10) and said regulating means (90) and monitoring means (70) via a control channel 150.

20 24. An optical WDM link comprising a wavelength control arrangement as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 23.

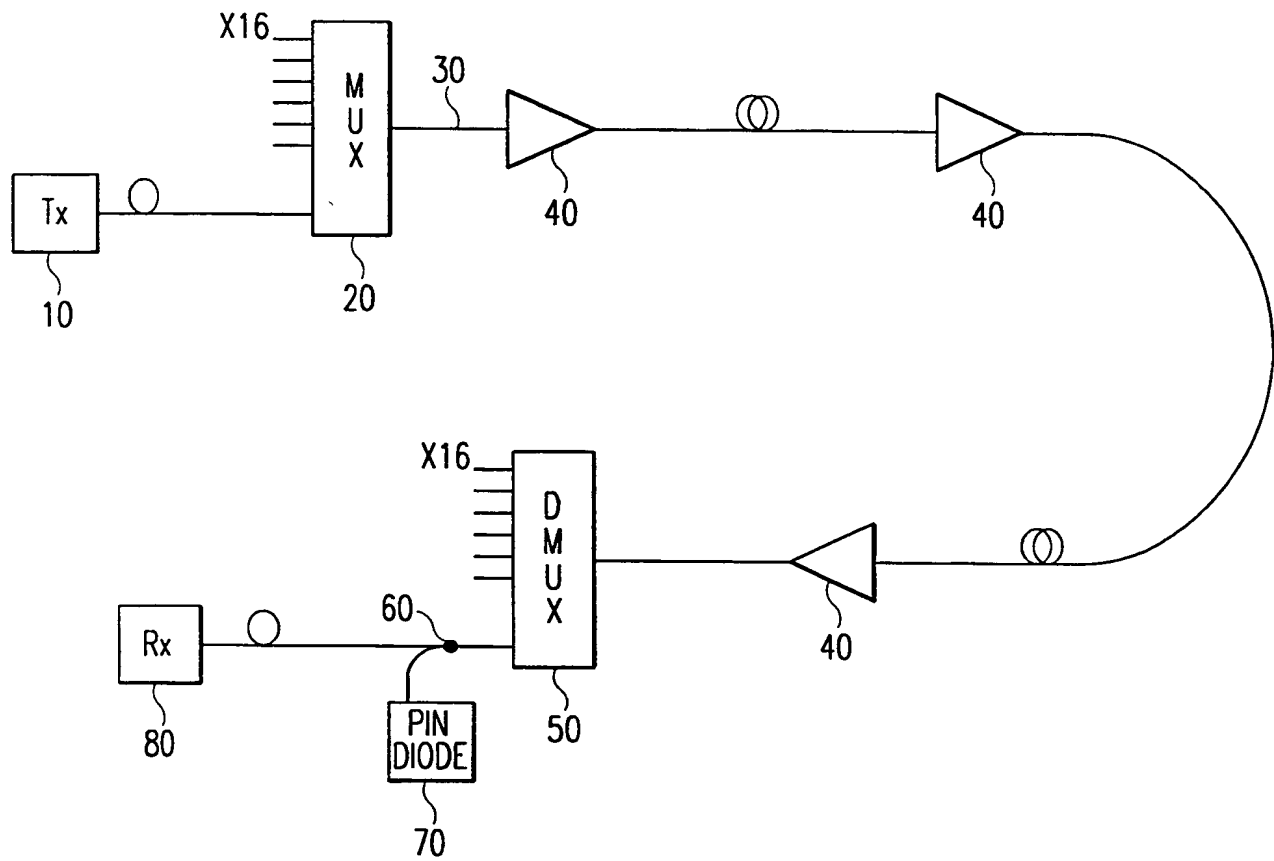


Fig. 1

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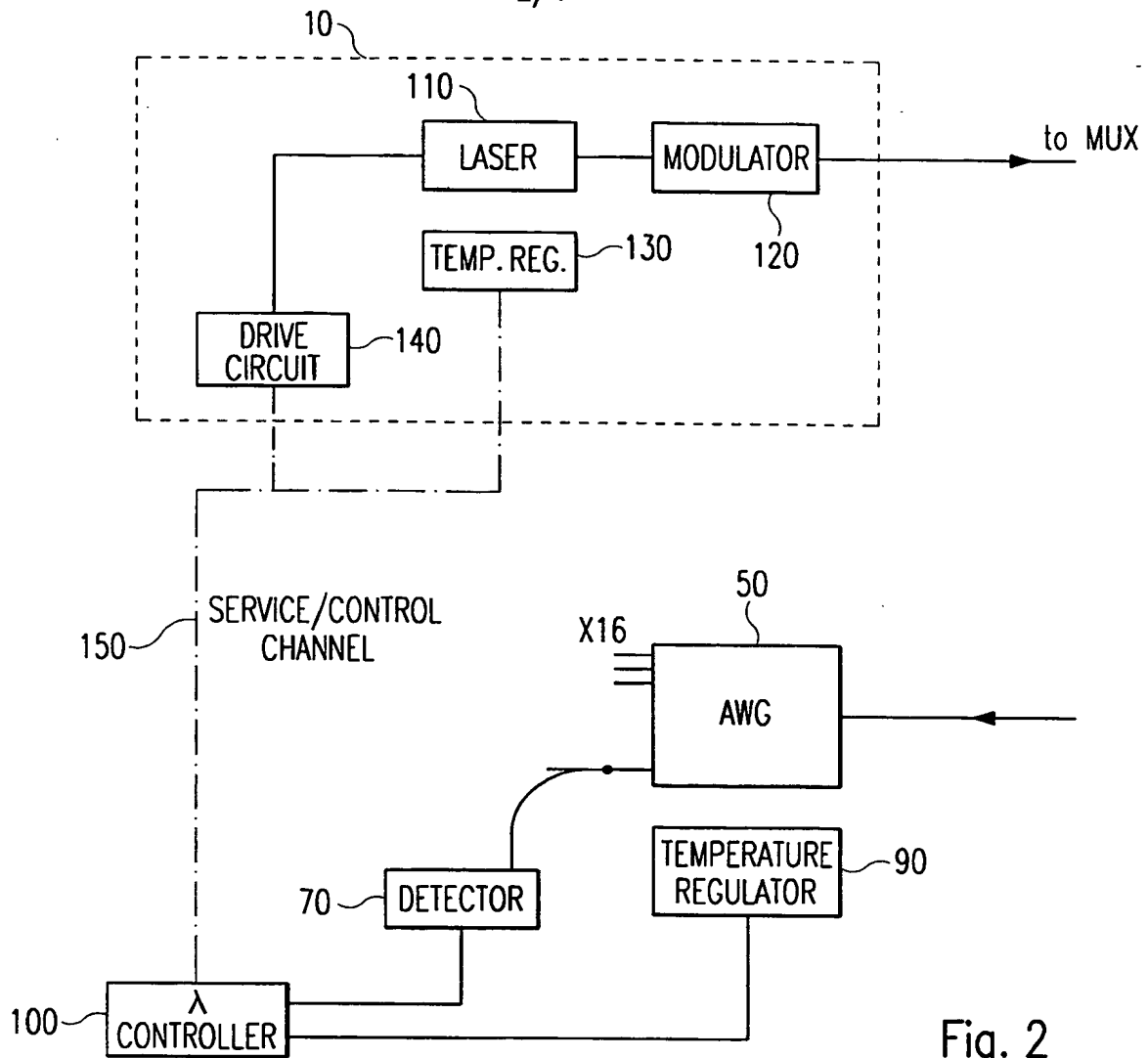


Fig. 2

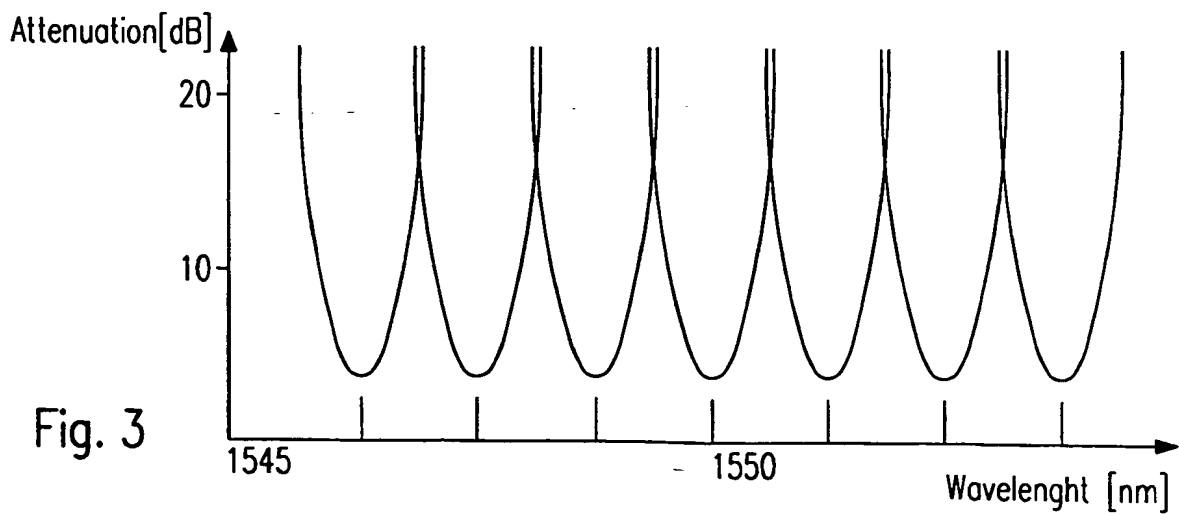


Fig. 3

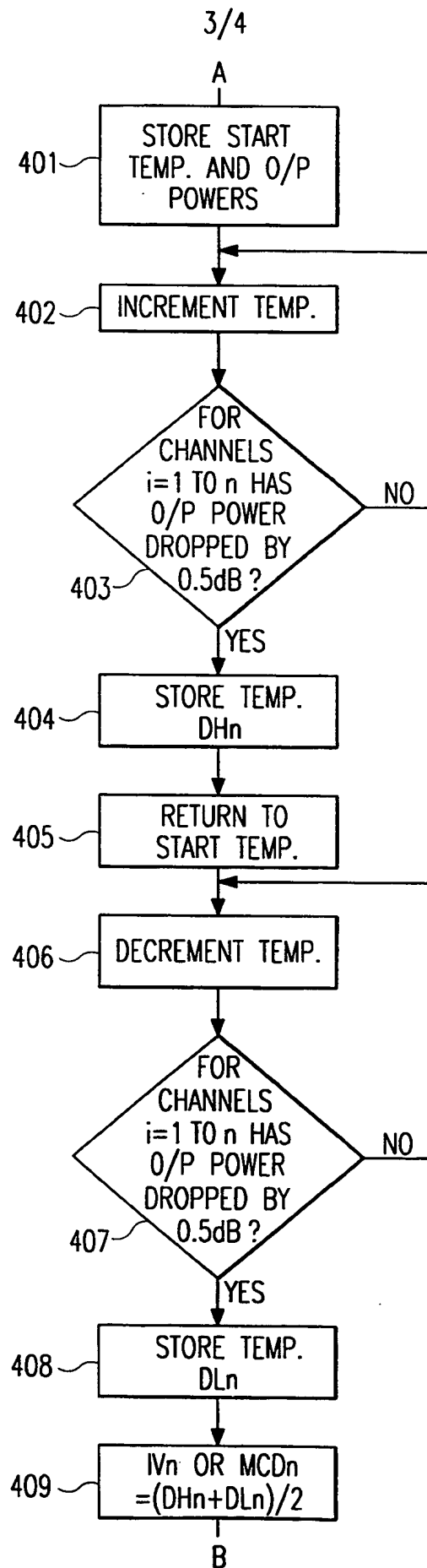


Fig. 4

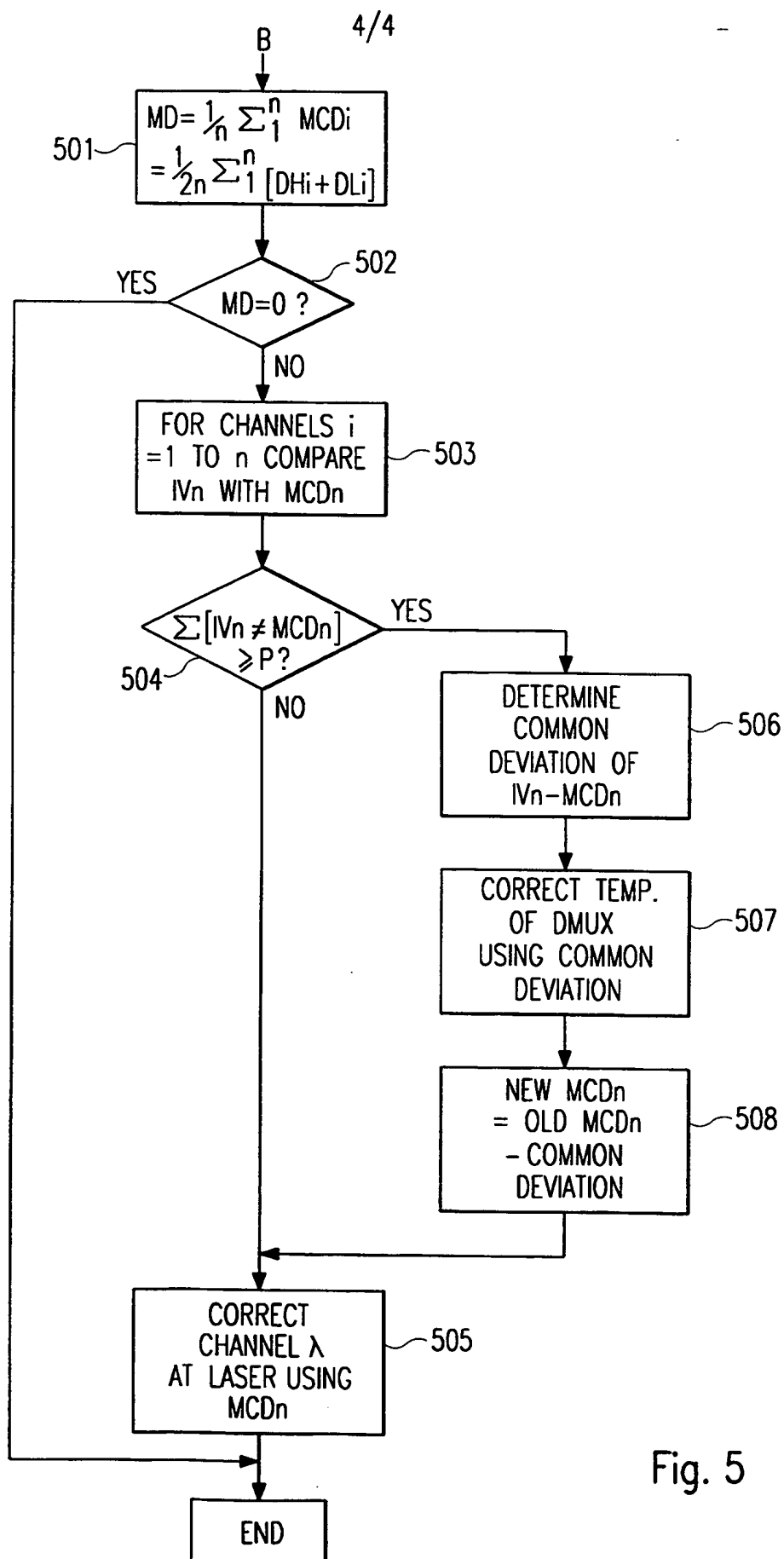


Fig. 5

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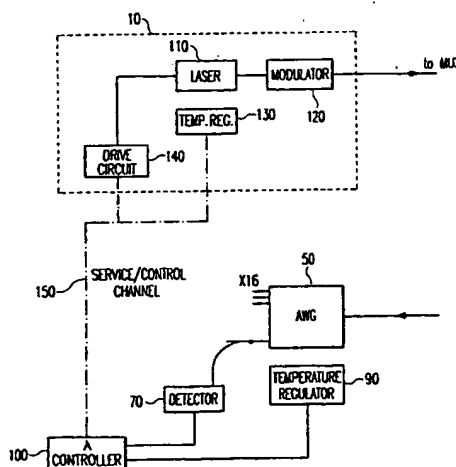
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(54) Title: WAVELENGTH CONTROL IN OPTICAL WDM SYSTEMS



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(57) Abstract: Wavelength drift in an optical WDM system between wavelengths launched by lasers (110) and received at a demultiplexer (50) can lead to disturbance of traffic signals if not identified and rectified rapidly. It is proposed to identify wavelength drift by determining a difference in temperature of the demultiplexer (50) for each channel between an actual temperature and a temperature for optimal transmission of the channel. The mean of these temperature differences for all channels is indicative of wavelength drift, while each difference is utilised to determine whether an individual channel is drifting in wavelength and to correct the drift. Wavelength drift can be detected and corrected whether sourced at a laser (110) or due to a temperature variation at the demultiplexer (50). Measurement and control can be performed during normal operation without impeding or degrading traffic flow. Wavelength influencing parameters other than temperature can be utilized.



For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

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X	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 097, no. 008, 29 August 1997 (1997-08-29) & JP 09 093223 A (CANON INC), 4 April 1997 (1997-04-04) abstract	1,2,13, 14,16, 17,24
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 095, no. 009, 31 October 1995 (1995-10-31) & JP 07 162070 A (CANON INC), 23 June 1995 (1995-06-23) abstract	14
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Date of the actual completion of the international search <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">18 October 1999</div>	Date of mailing of the international search report <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">25/10/1999</div>	
Name and mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Traverso, A</div>	

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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